IMMEDIATE RELEASE AUGUST 26, 1949

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The Secretary General of the United Nations has today announced the appointment of a distinguished American, Gordon R. Clapp, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority, as Chairman of an economic survey mission which is being created on recommendation of the Palestine Conciliation Commission.

Mr. Clapp will head a mission composed of experts, recruited on an international basis, which will examine the economic situation arising from the recent hostilities in the Near East and will recommend to the Conciliation Commission means of overcoming resultant economic dislocations, of reintegrating the refugees into the economic life of the area, and of creating economic conditions which will be conducive to the establishment of permanent peace. In view of the urgency of the problem, it is expected that the survey mission will complete its work in a comparatively short time, and Mr. Clapp will then resume his duties with the Tennessee Valley Authority.

The United States Government has attached the greatest significance to the work of the Conciliation Commission in facilitating settlement of issues outstanding between Israel and the Arab States. This Government now pledges full support to the newly created economic mission and stands ready to give careful consideration to such assistance as we might appropriately render, under the auspices of the United Nations, in carrying out the recommendations of the mission. I am confident that the United Nations and its member states which are in a position to render assistance will do likewise.

Traditional American cultural interests in the Near East have in recent years been reinforced by expanding economic and commercial ties and by recognition of the important role of that historical crossroads between three continents in the maintenance of peace and security of the world of today. This steady expansion of our relations with the Near East has given rise to a natural interest on the part of this Government in the welfare of the governments and peoples of that area. In so saying, however, I wish to emphasize that now as in the past we have no ax of special privilege to grind. We do, however, have an obvious community of interest with the countries of the Near East, and it is proper that we should give that relationship the careful and understanding consideration which it merits.

It is only since the first World War that most of the states in the Near East began their march toward self-government and independence. These states have now become their own masters. There is no doubt that the long struggles for independence, as well as the recent hostilities, have made it difficult for the peoples of the area to achieve progressive development in their economic and social institutions. The United States is deeply conscious of these needs and of the relationship between their satisfactory solution and healthy progress in the political field.

With the termination of the recent Arab-Israeli hostilities, the governments and the peoples of the Near East should now be in a position to devote the full measure of their abilities and resources to their economic and social betterment.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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In my inaugural address of January 20, 1949, I expressed the desire of this Government to extend technical assistance to underdeveloped areas under the so-called "Point Four" program. The application of this program to the Near East would be of material assistance in reinforcing any program which might be formulated on the basis of the recommendations of the economic survey mission.

It would be oversimplifying the problem, however, to imply that solution of the economic problems of the Near East depends wholly upon outside assistance. It is only through the initiative and cooperation of the states of the Near East that progress can be made toward the solution of their own grave problems. Progress can be made only if the states of the Near East collaborate along harmonious and constructive lines, seeking no advantage one over the other, but seeking, through expansion of trade and the exchange of skills and capital, the development of their resources for their common benefit. Progress can be made only when basic security is assured through removal of threats of aggression, and full reliance is placed on peaceful negotiation and on the United Nations for settlement of disputes. Progress can be made only if underlying conditions are modified to permit the people of the Near East to share, in proportion to their effort, the products of the soil and factories. All solutions can be reached in time through democratic and peaceful processes.

I am convinced that, if the Near Eastern nations affected by the recent hostilities will put aside their differences and bend their energies to constructive cooperation, they can find a basis on which to build permanent peace and stability. The United States stands ready to lend a firm and helping hand in such an endeavor.

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